

References.

30. Pulvinulina *repanda* { *spatiosa* (Ehr.) ... IV., XIV.
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 Menardii type { *Menardii* (D'Orb.) ... XI.
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31. Synspira *triquetra*, Ehr. XIV.
32. Rotalia *Beccarii* (Linn.) 24.
 ammoniformis (Lam.) VI.
 orbicularis, D'Orb. III.
33. Nonionina *scapha* (F. & M.) VI.
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34. Polystomella *craticulata* (F. & M.) 23.
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35. Orbitoides *javanicus*, Ehr. 23.
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36. Operculina *complanata* (Defr.) VI.
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37. Nummulina *gyzehensis* (Forsk.) VI.
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38. Amphistegina *javanica*, Ehr. 23.
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39. Fusulina *cylindrica*, Fischer 28.
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 palæophus (Ehr.) 28.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

New Ornithological Works.

THE first in importance of the works we here propose to notice is Andersson's 'Birds of Damara Land,' edited by Mr. J. H. Gurney*.

For nearly seventeen years Mr. Andersson collected materials for

* 'Notes on the Birds of Damara Land and the adjacent countries of South-west Africa.' By the late Charles John Andersson, author of 'Lake Ngami' and of 'The Okavango River.' Arranged and edited by John Henry Gurney, with some additional notes by the Editor, and an introductory chapter containing a sketch of the Author's life, abridged from the original published in Sweden. London: 1872. 8vo, pp. 394, with a map and 3 plates. (Van Voorst.)

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a work on the bird-fauna of South-western Africa, when death prevented him from accomplishing his task, the arrangement of which had already been commenced. Most fortunately for ornithological science he left behind him copious notes, which, with numerous prepared skins, made it possible for another to take up the work where he left it off and carry it to a successful conclusion. Yet Mr. Gurney's task in editing and arranging Andersson's notes has been no light one; and no small amount of original work has he performed in determining the species, and in making intricate points of synonymy intelligible to the student of ornithology.

Andersson's own notes describe the habits of each species, and give the places where they were found. For descriptions the reader is referred to Layard's 'Birds of South Africa,' and in many cases to Finsch and Hartlaub's 'Vögel Ost-Afrika's.'

In the nomenclature adopted by Mr. Gurney he has, we think, pushed the use of generic subdivisions to an extent that future researches will not warrant. He makes use of most of the terms given in Gray's 'Hand-list' in a subgeneric sense as indicating genera. It will be some time yet before ornithologists come to any agreement on the moot point of the value of generic names; for very much hasty work has to be carefully examined before many a genus can fairly be accepted or rejected as such. Yet we hardly think that the genera proposed, frequently in the most off-hand informal manner, by Bonaparte, or in such works as those of Reichenbach, are entitled to the respect here accorded them.

As a contribution to the knowledge of the geographical distribution of birds this work is invaluable, and makes a sensible addition to our information on African birds, now fast becoming complete, from Cape Colony northwards to the limits of Andersson's researches. With Cape Colony itself, Mr. E. L. Layard's useful little volume has made us familiar; while on the east coast in Port Natal and the Trans-Vaal Republic another diligent explorer, Mr. Ayres, with whom Mr. Gurney has cooperated, has done excellent work. Northward of these points our knowledge is but fragmentary; while of the ornithology of the districts the scenes of Livingstone's recent journeyings we, of course, know nothing as yet. In conclusion, we must record our opinion that this volume is a real and substantial addition to ornithological literature, and that we owe much to Mr. Gurney for rescuing Andersson's valuable notes from the danger in which his death had placed them.

The ornithology of Egypt has long been a subject of interest, and its birds have most of them been mentioned in various articles of greater or less completeness scattered though the pages of 'The Ibis' and elsewhere; so that, though Captain Shelley has done good work in collecting these scattered materials*, more especially as he has verified and observed for himself during several visits to the

* 'A Handbook to the Birds of Egypt.' By G. E. Shelley, F.G.S., F.Z.S., &c. London: 1872. Large 8vo, pp. 342, with 14 coloured plates. (Van Voorst.)

country, not much novelty was to be expected in retraversing well-trodden ground.

Some short chapters at the commencement of the book give a general idea of the mode of travelling in Egypt, and of the favourite haunts of its birds. These serve as an introduction to the more formal part, where each species of bird is individually treated of and described.

The number of species mentioned is 352, which at first sight seems a large total when the nature of the country is taken into consideration, and seeing that no high mountain-chains are present to maintain a varied fauna. But Egypt is peculiarly situated, being the only strip of fertile land, with deserts on either side, to form a connexion between the Mediterranean and the equatorial regions of Africa, and is hence a highway, as it were, for birds passing both north and south. The number of birds, both of species and individuals, is doubtless increased by this favourable circumstance.

The portion of Egypt treated of by Captain Shelley is confined between the Mediterranean and the Second Cataract, and west and east by the Libyan and Arabian deserts. A glance at the list of birds found there shows that they chiefly belong to the fauna of South-eastern Europe. Its connexion with Ethiopia proper and with the East is only shown here and there by the presence of such forms as *Pycnonotus*, *Crateropus*, *Nectarinia*, and *Centropus*. But Egypt, though belonging to the European fauna, forms quite an outlying province of it; passing a little further south, we come to the truly Ethiopian fauna of Abyssinia.

But to return to the book itself. Captain Shelley's plan throughout has been to give the Latin and English name of each species, a short note of the places where it is found in Egypt, a brief description and a reference to some well-known illustrated work to assist in the subsequent identification of each species. Where his own observations have been extended or modified by others who have preceded him over the same ground, he has given a reference to the observation quoted. These chiefly refer to the works of Von Henglin, who has travelled in and written much on the ornithology of this country and those adjoining it immediately to the southward.

With this plan we have not much fault to find; and we believe that any one travelling in Egypt with Captain Shelley's book, and a smattering only of bird lore, will make fair way in determining the birds he shoots; but his task would have been instructively lightened had a little assistance been rendered him towards determining the genera and higher groups, which, as the work stands, are left for determination to any prior knowledge the traveller may possess. But we are, in the case of genera, perhaps asking a little too much in a work of this description; we regret, however, to see serious confusion in the names of the families, and even orders, which we are at a loss to account for, unless it be that pardonable oversights in the MS. have not been detected by a careful revision of the proofs.

The plates in this work are very acceptable, and have been executed by Mr. Keulemans in the style which has rendered him so

favourite an ornithological draughtsman. The subjects are judiciously selected from characteristic or peculiar species.

Mr. Harting's last contribution* brings us nearer home; and though he offers a quasi apology for adding another to the already extant works on British Birds, we think none was needed; and we doubt not the present volume will be accepted as a useful addition to the ornithological literature of the British Islands.

In the first portion Mr. Harting comes forward as a reformer of nomenclature, and, to some extent, of arrangement, taking Yarrell's third edition as his starting-point. On both subjects he still leaves room for justifiable improvement. As regards nomenclature, the three rules he specifies as his guide by no means attempt to solve several intricate questions—such, for instance, as the best generic name available for the Nightingale. He uses *Luscinia*; but we think *Daulias* of Boie, on the whole, far preferable. Then, too, why should Linnæus's name in connexion with the Stilt entirely disappear? There are other cases we might mention. Mr. Harting states that he has avoided the use of subgeneric names; yet he does not hesitate to place the Titlarks under a family name, *Anthidæ*, as distinct from the Wagtails, *Motacillidæ*, and to banish the Rock from the true Thrushes under the name *Petrocinclidæ*. We are at a loss to know, and Mr. Harting makes no attempt to show us, how the adoption of these family names can be justified by the production of definite characters of sufficient value to show their distinctness.

The alterations in arrangement are so far advantageous; but a little more might have been done in this direction without doing much violence to the feelings of British ornithologists. We point especially to the retention of the *Hirundinidæ* in juxtaposition with the Swifts. Those whose studies are bestowed on exotic species are considerably in advance of their fellow students whose attention is confined to the birds of these islands in such matters; and with them there are questions of affinities which have passed out of the region of doubt which are clung to by our home naturalists with, we might say, almost obstinate tenacity. What is required of our workers at home is a more independent spirit, a thorough investigation of bird-structure, and, what has never been the case, a keener appreciation of the work that is going on around them, much of which affects the special sphere to which they may confine their attention.

The second portion of Mr. Harting's work has the merit of greater completeness; and in gathering together all the records of the appearance of occasional visitants to our shores, he has provided workers over the same ground with a ready index to facilitate their labours. The records thus gathered show a goodly list of instances where members of the same species have over and over again wan-

* 'A Handbook of British Birds, showing the Distribution of the Resident and Migratory Species in the British Islands, with an Index to the records of the Rarer Visitants.' By J. E. Harting, F.L.S., F.Z.S., Member of the British Ornithologists' Union, &c. &c. London: 1872. Large 8vo, pp. 198. (Van Voorst.)

dered to our shores; and on seeing how numerous in some cases they are, one cannot refrain from the feeling that it is far from impossible that we might now own some of these birds as established settlers had the treatment they received at our hands been reversed. The passion for collecting British-killed birds, so prevalent at the present time, has much to answer for.

In his introductory chapter, Mr. Harting has analyzed the occasional visitants to show the origin whence they came. It is not a little surprising to see how large is the proportion of American species which again and again find their way to these shores. He finds it extremely difficult to believe that the non-aquatic species have actually performed unaided this journey of, at least, 1700 miles; but of the powers of sustained flight possessed by birds we, as yet, know very little indeed, and the task may not, under favourable circumstances, be so difficult as it would appear.

In reading Mr. Harting's book we detect some errors perhaps unavoidable in a work of the kind; but there are others we hardly expected to see, such as the mistake about the Grouse and Ptarmigan in the Introduction (p. xvii). We are not aware that the distinctness of the Ptarmigan of Scotland from the continental bird has ever been advocated; whilst the validity of the Grouse of the British Islands to be considered a species distinct from the Willow Grouse has been a bone of contention for years. Then, too, Gilbert White's account of the Honey Buzzard breeding in Selborne Hanger is overlooked, and also the fact of the Harlequin Duck breeding regularly in considerable numbers in Iceland. Mr. Harting records it as of accidental occurrence in Europe.

But we are not disposed to criticise too severely a book which will prove of undoubted service.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Bell Collection of Reptiles.

To the Editors of the Annals and Magazine of Natural History.

Museum of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy,
Cambridge, Nov. 22, 1872.

GENTLEMEN,—My attention has been drawn to the letters of Prof. Westwood and Dr. Gray in the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History' for November 1872, respecting Mr. Bell's collection of reptiles. I beg to be allowed to make the following statement.

The whole of that gentleman's museum was purchased by my late father, Professor Clark, in 1856, who thus describes the acquisition in the preface to the 'Catalogue of the Osteological Portion of Specimens contained in the Anatomical Museum of the University of Cambridge' (Cambridge, 1862):—

"In 1856 I had the pleasure of increasing the Collection by adding to it the osteological collection of Professor Bell, F.R.S., &c.